

**ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD**

1740 W. ADAMS ST., SUITE 4600, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007

PHONE (602) 364-1PET (1738) FAX (602) 364-1039

VETBOARD.AZ.GOV

**COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION FORM**

*If there is an issue with more than one veterinarian please file a separate Complaint Investigation Form for each veterinarian*

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date Received: Feb. 20, 2020 Case Number: 20-17

**A. THIS COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING:**

Name of Veterinarian/CVT: \_\_\_\_\_

Premise Name: Southern Arizona Veterinary Specialty & Emergency Center

Premise Address: 7474 E. Broadway Blvd.

City: Tucson State: AZ Zip Code: 85710

Telephone: (520) 888-3177

**B. INFORMATION REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL FILING COMPLAINT\*:**

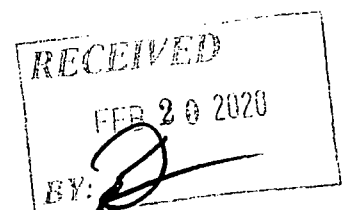
Name: Edward Doran

Address: [REDACTED]

City: [REDACTED] State: [REDACTED] Zip Code: [REDACTED]

Home Telephone: [REDACTED] Cell Telephone: [REDACTED]

\*STATE LAW REQUIRES WE HAVE TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME UNLESS WE CAN SHOW THAT DISCLOSURE WILL RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO YOU, SOMEONE ELSE OR THE PUBLIC PER A.R.S. § 41-1010. IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANTIAL HARM WILL RESULT IN DISCLOSURE OF YOUR NAME PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES OF RESTRAINING ORDERS OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.



**C. PATIENT INFORMATION (1):**

Name: Rascal  
Breed/Species: Boxer/Pit Bull mix  
Age: 3 years Sex: male Color: Brindle

**PATIENT INFORMATION (2):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Breed/Species: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. VETERINARIANS WHO HAVE PROVIDED CARE TO THIS PET FOR THIS ISSUE:**

*Please provide the name, address and phone number for each veterinarian.*

Southern Arizona Veterinary Specialty & Emergency Center (veterinarian name unknown)

Pima Pet Clinic 4832 E. Speedway Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85712 520-327-5624 Dr.

Maria? (primary location where treatment was rendered)

4 Paws Veterinary Clinic 4750 E. Grant Rd. Tucson, AZ 85712 520-321-0277

(primary veterinarian, follow up treatment to injury)

**E. WITNESS INFORMATION:**

*Please provide the name, address and phone number of each witness that has direct knowledge regarding this case.*

David Zychiewicz, \_\_\_\_\_ (neighbor who drove us to Tucson)

**Attestation of Person Requesting Investigation**

By signing this form, I declare that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Further, I authorize the release of any and all medical records or information necessary to complete the investigation of this case.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 2/18/2020

**F. ALLEGATIONS and/or CONCERNS:**

*Please provide all information that you feel is relevant to the complaint. This portion must be either typewritten or clearly printed in ink.*

Primary complaint has to do with slow, uncaring treatment and lack of professional standards for evaluating and caring for my animal. I am attaching text of the letter sent to this facility following our visit.

February 9, 2020

Southern Arizona Veterinary Specialty Emergency Center  
7474 E. Broadway Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85710

To whom it may concern,

On Sunday, February 2, 2020, Rascal, my male boxer/pit mix was attacked by javelin and suffered 4 puncture wounds to the throat from a bite. He was bleeding profusely, and it appeared an artery might have been punctured due to the spurting of blood from one of the bites. This occurred in Dragoon, AZ. I applied pressure to the wound, but once released, the heavy bleeding resumed. I was alone and unable to drive/hold pressure on the wound at the same time. A neighbor offered to drive us to Tucson, where we went to your facility for treatment. No facilities were open in the Benson or Willcox area on a Sunday.

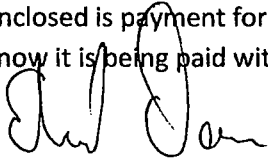
Upon arrival, Rascal was seen promptly for evaluation, and I was told there would be a 2-3 hour wait due to other cases. This concerned me, but as he was triaged quickly, I decided to wait. My frustration and negative experience began when he was returned to me in the lobby. No information was provided regarding the severity of his injury. He continued to bleed heavily, soiling the floor. I maintained pressure on the wound. No one asked or offered to provide a clean towel to apply to the wound, nor to clean the blood spill. I eventually asked, and was provided a towel. After an approximately 30 minute wait, I was informed the wait time would now be 3-4 hours.

After 2-1/2 hours, we were seen by a veterinarian. He performed a quick evaluation, and indicated at a minimum, stitches and flush of the wound would be needed. Until he was treated, the extent of internal injuries would not be known. He then said a tech would be in shortly to provide an estimate. The short wait ended up being 55 minutes. While waiting, he had begun shivering uncontrollably, which concerned me that he may be going into shock. When the tech arrived, there was no check of the dog to evaluate his condition and ensure he was ok. She started to review charges, when I asked how much longer before he would be treated. She started to explain that as an emergency center, it would take time. I became frustrated, as at this point it was approaching 4 hours after arrival, and still no sense of when he would be treated. I left, taking Rascal to another emergency facility, where he was triaged, and sent for surgery within 15 minutes of arrival.

My primary complaint with your facility has to do with the almost nonexistent display of any concern for the animal. Your staff operated in a robotic, non caring manner. This was a traumatic event for both my dog and me, and nearly 8 hours after the incident, I was still unable to get any detail of when he would be treated. His bleeding was continuing throughout this wait, and from the multiple blood soaked

towels, he had lost a significant amount of blood. Simply being (more)communicative and perhaps even showing some degree of compassion would have been most appreciated. Once the injuries had been treated at the other facility, I took time to look at reviews of your hospital, which sadly were quite consistent with my experience. That has no relevance to my complaint, but should serve as a reminder to your staff that your facility is far from adhering to your core values of Highest level of care, Exceeding expectations, Communicating effectively, and Providing compassionate care.

Enclosed is payment for the triage, which was performed. I do not protest the charge, but want you to know it is being paid with reluctance.



Edward Doran





**SOUTHERN ARIZONA VETERINARY  
SPECIALTY & EMERGENCY CENTER**

March 4, 2020

Tracy Riendeau, CVT  
Investigative Division  
Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board  
1740 W Adams St Ste 4600  
Phoenix AZ 85007  
*re: case 20-77*

**received**  
3/5/20 *R*

Dear Tracy Riendeau, CVT:

I am the hospital administrator for Southern Arizona Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Center (SAVSEC), and I am writing this letter on behalf of Dr. Reuben Merideth. Dr. Merideth is one of the owners of SAVSEC and is who the notification was sent to. The notice was sent to his home address and Dr. Merideth has been out of town, so I did not receive this notice until Monday March 2. I did leave you a phone message on that day. Dr. Merideth did not have any contact with the complainant. Mr. Doran and his pet were seen by a relief veterinarian Dr. Glen Grady.

We received the complaint letter from Mr. Doran on Friday February 21, he mailed the letter with a check for his exam fee. The letter made it to my desk on the following Monday. I called Mr. Doran and left a message. I did not receive a return call. At that time, I reviewed the electronic medical record and saw that Dr. Grady, a relief veterinarian, was the doctor who he saw in the ER on February 2. I emailed Dr. Grady the records and the letter. I asked him if he could shed any more light on what had happened at this visit. He said, and I am paraphrasing, the dog had some lacerations, nothing remarkable and that he recommended a laceration repair and had the tech do an estimate for the procedure. He was told a short time later that the owner left because he did not want to wait. I spoke with the tech and she said that the owner became difficult and did not want to wait and thought everything was taking too long. I asked if the dog was bleeding and she said maybe a very small amount. There has been no contact with the owner since the visit on February 2, 2020.

I have attached Dr. Grady's SOAP, the estimate for services, a copy of the invoice mailed to the client and the electronic communication page that includes the technician, Sunshine Watson, notes as well as the entry from when I called the owner.

Sincerely,

Sue Frey, CVT  
Hospital Administrator



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**INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

**TO:** Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board

**FROM:** PM Investigative Committee: Adam Almaraz - Chair  
Amrit Rai, DVM  
Cameron Dow, DVM  
William Hamilton  
Brian Sidaway, DVM

**STAFF PRESENT:** Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT – Investigations  
Mark Harris, Assistant Attorney General

**RE:** Case: 20-77

Complainant(s): Edward Doran

Respondent(s): Reuben Merideth, DVM (License: 1131)

**SUMMARY:**

Complaint Received at Board Office: 2/20/20

Committee Discussion: 7/7/20

Board IIR: 8/19/20

**APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES:**

Laws as Amended August 2018

(Lime Green); Rules as Revised

September 2013 (Yellow)

On February 2, 2020, "Rascal," a 3-year-old male Boxer/Pit Bull mix was presented to Respondent's premises on emergency after a suspected javelina attack. The dog was triaged; after waiting for almost 4 hours, Complainant left the premises and took the dog elsewhere for care.

Respondent is the responsible veterinarian for the premises and did not see the dog.

Complainant was noticed and was available.

Respondent was noticed and was available.

**The Committee reviewed medical records, testimony, and other documentation as described below:**

- Complainant(s) narrative: *Edward Doran*
- Respondent(s) narrative/medical record: *Reuben Merideth, DVM (Sue Frey, CVT supplied narrative)*
- Consulting Veterinarian(s) narrative/medical records: *Judith Parker, DVM – Pima Pet Clinic*

**PROPOSED 'FINDINGS of FACT':**

1. On February 2, 2020, Complainant stated that he believed his dog was attacked by a javelin and had several puncture wounds to the throat. The dog was bleeding profusely and spurting blood from one of the wounds. Complainant applied pressure to the wounds and had a neighbor drive him to an emergency facility in Tucson, which is approximately an hour away from Complainant's home.
2. Upon arrival, approximately 10:30am, the dog was triaged for evaluation; Complainant was told there would be a 2 – 3 hour wait due to other emergencies. Upon exam by DVM Glen Grady, the dog had weight = 30.8kg, a temperature = 102.4 degrees, a heart rate = 176bpm and a respiration rate = 60rpm (pant). There was an irregular 6cm ventral neck laceration with moderate SQ pocketing, which would need to be explored. Additionally, there was some bruising of the sternum, no apparent ballooning on apposing skin and only minor pooled blood. Dr. Grady felt the dog was stable but would need anesthesia to surgically repair the cervical laceration and probable drain.
3. According to Complainant, after approximately 2 ½ hours of waiting, the dog was seen by a veterinarian. A quick evaluation was performed and Complainant was advised that the dog would need, at a minimum, would flush and sutures. Until the dog was treated, the extent of the internal injuries was unknown. Dr. Grady advised that technical staff would be in shortly to provide an estimate. Complainant stated that he waited for almost an hour before staff returned with the estimate.
4. Technical staff member, Ms. Watson, entered the room to present the estimate to Complainant. He stated that he had been waiting for 4 hours thus Ms. Watson explained that since they are an emergency clinic they need to take cases that are priority. Since she could not give Complainant an exact time the laceration repair would occur, he became angry, and decided to leave to get care elsewhere.
5. Complainant left the premises at 2:45pm, according to Ms. Watson.
6. At approximately 3:00pm, the dog was presented to Pima Pet Clinic for treatment. The dog was seen, surgery was performed and the dog was discharged between 6 – 6:30pm.
7. Complainant expressed concerns that after the dog was triaged at Respondent's premises, he was returned to the lobby. No information was provided regarding the severity of the dog's injury. The dog continued to bleed heavily, therefore Complainant continued to hold pressure on the wound. No one offered to provide a clean towel or clean the blood on the floor, until he asked. This was a traumatic event for both Complainant and the dog and he was not able to get any details of when the dog would be treated. Some compassion and communication would have been appreciated.



**COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:**

The Committee discussed that Complainant was accurately informed that there could be a lengthy wait from the time they entered the premises. The dog was triaged. Understandable, the pet owner's perception of the gravity of the situation was not in line with the medical professional's evaluation of the dog.

**COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED CONCLUSIONS of LAW:**

The Committee concluded that no violations of the *Veterinary Practice Act* occurred.

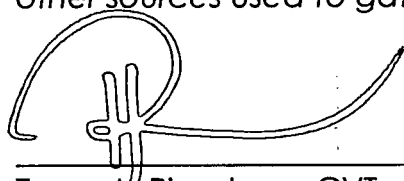
**COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION:**

**Motion:** It was moved and seconded the Board:

*Dismiss this issue with no violation.*

**Vote:** The motion was approved with a vote of 5 to 0.

*The information contained in this report was obtained from the case file, which includes the complaint, the respondent's response, any consulting veterinarian or witness input, and any other sources used to gather information for the investigation.*

A stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TRACY A. RIENDEAU', written over a horizontal line.

Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT  
Investigative Division